LETTER

FROM

THE HON. CHARLES TUPPER,

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, &c.

TO THE PEOPLE OF NOVA SCOTIA:

My Fellow Countrymen,—

Having been called, under the free institutions which we enjoy, to take a leading part in the administration of the public affairs of my native Province, and charged by the Legislature, as I and my co-delegates now here have been, to promote the Union of British America, I think it my duty to draw your attention to a very extraordinary proposal which the Hon. Joseph Howe has recently published, and in which all classes of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia are vitally interested.

You are aware that Mr. Howe, not long since, claiming to represent the views of a majority of the people of that Province, published a pamphlet embodying all the objections which he could present in opposition to the proposed Union between Canada and the Maritime Provinces. To that pamphlet I replied at length, and discussed fully every argument which had been offered in opposition to a Union of the Colonies, and until Mr. Howe ventures a reply to which he is not ashamed to attach his own signature, no further observations seem called for on that subject. The effect of Mr. Howe's first pamphlet upon the intelligent public mind of this country may be gathered from the following extracts from one of the most independent and able journals in Great Britain. The *Saturday Review* says:—

"It would not be easy fully to appreciate the benefits which Confederation provides to the Maritime Provinces, without first hearing the feeble views which are still urged by the discomfited Minority. * * * Mr. Howe's arguments, however, are about as conclusive in favor of the scheme which he denounces, as anything which possibly could be urged by its supporters. * * * Mr. Howe's pamphlet is valuable as shewing on how weak a basis of Provincial prejudice and political cowardice the opposition to this large scheme of Union has been built."

Finding that the Government and Parliament, in common with the press and people of Great Britain, regarded the proposed Union of British North America as not only calculated to promote the best interests and progress of those Colonies, but also to secure and perpetuate their connection with the British Crown, and that the "feeble" objections which he had urged to that policy were considered as "conclusive in favor of the scheme which he "denounced," Mr. Howe addressed himself to the still more difficult task of propounding a counter plan for the organization of the Empire. It is a curious commentary upon the representative institutions of which Mr. Howe has professed to be the advocate, that at a time when delegates from Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, appointed by their Governments with the authority of large majorities of the Legislatures of those Provinces, are assembling in London to arrange with Her Majesty's Government the terms of a measure to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament, by which they may be united under one Government, Mr. Howe modestly asks the British Cabinet to ignore the action of the Governments and constitutional

representatives of Provinces numbering nearly four millions of inhabitants, and at his sole instance to propose a Colonial policy still more objectionable than that which lost the American States to the British Crown, and which is now universally condemned.

The opponents of Confederation in the Maritime Provinces who have been taught to believe that there exists no necessity for any change in our institutions in order to render our position more secure, will read with some astonishment the following aspersions from one who claims to be the exponent of their views. In Mr. HOWE's pamphlet just published, he says (page 7) :—

"It is apparent that but for external pressure and danger from without, we might go on as we are without any material change. * * * But we have no such security for peace, or if there be any, it is only to be sought in such an organization and armament of the whole Empire as will make the certainty of defeat a foregone conclusion to any foreign power that may attempt to break it."

Again (page 11) Mr. Howe says :—

"Turning to the United States we find our most formidable commercial rival, and as matters stand, perhaps our least reliable friend and ally. I am not without some hope that by prudence, firmness, and good humour, and by systematically setting public opinion right through American channels of circulation as to the power, the public sentiment, and the designs of this country, we may yet be able to so inform the masses who control the Government, as to make war with Great Britain nearly impossible; but in the present temper of the Republic we have no security for peace, and we may as well then survey with discriminating forecast, the strength and resources of the nation with which we have to contend."

I do not know whether Mr. Howe would class his own publications among the means of setting public opinion in America right "as to the power" of Great Britain, but I certainly cannot imagine anything more calculated to invite aggression, than the exaggerated pictures he is constantly drawing of the power of the "Great Republic," and the weakness of this country. He says (page 13) :—

"I would be sorry to see them (the British Islands) even now without any support from the outlying Provinces, engaged in a war with the United States, and I cannot disguise from myself, that twenty years hence, their position will be much more perilous, and the odds against them much more disproportionate."

Having thus given his opinion as to the perilous position in which the British North American Colonies now stand, and the necessity for immediate action, Mr. Howe proceeds to detail his mode of saving the Empire, as follows. He says (page 13) :—

"Now I would lift this question above the range of doubt or apprehension, and prepare for all eventualities by such an organization of the Empire, as would enable the sovereign to command its entire physical force. If Russia, France, or the United States is involved in war to-morrow, the revenue and the manhood of the whole territory are at the disposal of the Executive; while if we go to war, the whole burden of sustaining it falls upon the people of these two small Islands. This is not fair: our unprepared condition makes war at all times possible, sometimes imminent." * * * (Page 14.) "I forsee the difficulties in this as in all other cases; there is a certain amount of indifference, of ignorance and of selfishness to be overcome, but I rely upon the general intelligence of the Empire to perceive the want, and upon its patriotism and public spirit to supply it. Surely if a Russian serf can be got to march from Siberia to the Crimea to defend his Empire, the Queen's subjects can be educated to know and feel that it is alike their duty and their interest to march anywhere to defend their own. The young men of Maine and Massachusetts rushed to protect their capital from rebellious fellow citizens, and I am sure when once the possibility of a requisition is made familiar to the Colonial mind, that the youths of our outlying Provinces would rush as eagerly to defend London from a foreign foe. "But it may be said that the Russian obeys a central authority which it would be vain to dispute, and that the American fights for his perfect citizenship, which includes the control of the foreign policy and representation in the National Council." * * (Page 15.) "I can see no solution of them all more simple and easy than this: To treat all the Colonies which have Legislatures and where the system of Responsible Government is in operation, as having achieved a higher political status than Crown Colonies, or foreign dependencies, and to permit them to send to the House of Commons one, two, or three members of their Cabinets, according to their size, popula-

tion, and relative importance. The advantages gained by this mode of selection, assuming the principle of any sort of representation to be sanctioned, are various,"

* * * "We are secure of men truly representing the majority in each Colony, because they would speak in the name, and bring with them the authority of the Cabinets and constituencies they represented. We have no trouble about changing them, as they would sit till their successors, duly accredited, announced the fact of a change of administration." * * * * * * *

"We are secure by this mode of obtaining the best men, because only the best men can win their way into these Colonial Cabinets, of whom the flower would be selected by their colleagues to represent the intellect and character of each Province on the floor of Parliament." (Page 24):—"Having made this step in advance, I would proceed to treat the whole Empire as the British Islands are treated, holding every man liable to serve the Queen in war, and making every pound's worth of property responsible for the national defence.

"Great care should be taken that, in every Province, a decennial census should be prepared under every possible guarantee for fulness and accuracy, and the information furnished by these returns should be digested and condensed so as to present at a glance a picture of the Empire.

"The census would of course give, as the basis of legistation:

"The number of people.

"The value of real and personal property.

"The amount of exports and imports.

"The tonnage owned.

"New ships built.

"The number of fishermen and mariners employed. The information gathered by the last census may, for present use, be sufficient, and if so:—

"A bill, making provision for the defence of the Empire, may be prepared to operate uniformly over the whole, and should be submitted simultaneously to all the Provinces. It should provide:—

"For the enrollment of all the men from 16 to 60, liable to be called out in case of war.

"For the effective organization and training, as militia, of men between the ages of 18 and 45, year by year in time of peace.

"For fixing the quota, which in case of hostilities any where each Province is to provide during the continuance of the war, the Colonial Government having the option to supply its quota by sending regiments already embodied, or by furnishing volunteers from the youth of the country, who might be better spared.

"For incorporating these men into the British Army with their regimental numbers, but with some distinctive name or badge to mark their origin, as the "Welsh Fusileers," or "Enniskillen Dragoons," are distinguished. They should be paid out of the military chest, and treated, in all respects, as British troops, from the moment that they were handed over to the Commander-in-Chief.

"For the establishment of military training schools in each Province, and for instruction in military engineering and the art of war, at some siminary within reach of the youth of every group of Colonies.

"For the enrolment of all seafaring men from 16 to 60 as a naval reserve, the effective men between 18 and 45 being obliged to serve on board of block ships, harbour defences, or in any of Her Majesty's ships on the station, or in forts of water batteries, for the same number of days which effective militiamen are obliged to serve on shore." (Page 24):—"By another bill to operate uniformly over the whole Empire[1] (India being excluded, as she provides for her own army,) the funds should be raised for the national defence. This measure, like the other, should be submitted for the sanction of the Colonial Government and Legislatures. This tax should be distinguished from all other imposts, that the amount collected could be seen at a glance, and that every portion of the whole people might see what they paid, and what every other portion had to pay.

"This fund could be either raised as head-money over the whole population, or in the form of a property or income tax, or by a certain percentage upon imports; constituting next to existing liabilities a first charge upon the Colonial revenues, and being paid into the military chest to the credit of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury."

In order to guard myself against the possibility of misrepresenting Mr. Howe's scheme, I have reproduced it in his own words. It will thus be seen, that Mr. Howe proposes that a merely nominal representation in the House of Commons should be given to the British Colonies enjoying Responsible Government, and that in exchange, the most despotic power should be exercised over the revenues and manhood of those Colonies. Apparently enamoured with the system adopted in despotic countries, Mr. Howe proposes to reduce the British Colonist to the position of a Russian "serf." It would be impossible to conceive a scheme more oppressive or unjust. It would give to the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, a representation in the House of Commons equal to that now enjoyed by

the electors of four small Boroughs in Great Britain, and that in return for sacrifices such as no British subject is now called upon to endure. For the honour of having one single representative in the British Parliament, the three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants of Nova Scotia would not only be called upon to suffer an enormous amount of annual taxation, but the person of every man in the Colony would be liable to be drafted at an hour's notice to fight the battles of Great Britain in India, or any other part of the world. But apart from the monstrous absurdity of such a proposition, it is founded upon the most palpable fallacies. Mr. Howe assumes in the first place, that the Colonies now contribute nothing to the defence of the Empire. He says (Page 13), "If we go to war, the whole burthen of sustaining it "falls upon these two small Islands."—(Page 26), "I see no reason why "the Colonies should not contribute in peace and in war their fair quotas "toward the defence of the Empire." He speaks of the "ignorance and "selfishness to be overcome" in getting a fair contribution to the defence of ths Empire, and boldly propounds the policy of coercion, if his scheme be not adopted by the Colonies. He says (Page 30):—

"But suppose this policy propounded and the appeal made, and that the response is a determined negative. Even in that case it would be wise to make it, because the public conscience of the Mother Country would then be clear, and the hands of the statesmen free to deal with the whole question of national defence in its broadest outlines, or in its bearings on the case of any single Province, or group of Provinces, which might then be dealt with in a more independent manner. But I will not for a moment do my fellow Colonists the injustice to suspect that they will decline a fair compromise of a question, which involves at once their own protection and the consolidation and security of the Empire. At all events, if there are any communities of British origin anywhere, who desire to enjoy all the privileges and immunities of the Queen's subjects without paying for and defending them, let us ascertain where and who they are; let us measure the propositions of political repudiation now in a season of tranquility—when we have leisure to guage the extent of the evil, and to apply correctives."

If ever there was a time in the history of the Empire when any man should hesitate thus to assail the self-denying patriotism of British Colonists, surely it is the present. Let Mr. HOWE but cast his eyes across the Atlantic to British America, and he will see all classes of the people ungrudgingly and without a murmur lavishing their treasure in upholding the dignity of the Empire, and protecting British possessions from invasion. British Americans are now loyally and valiantly defending that portion of the Empire which they occupy against the results of discontent in Ireland, for which they are not in the most remote degree responsible. The little Province of Nova Scotia annually expends about four hundred thousand dollars in time and money in the maintenance of the dignity of the Empire, and every able-bodied man is held by law liable to be called into the field to defend British territory the moment it is attacked; yet Mr. HOWE proclaims to the world that she does nothing, and invites the British Government to offer the position of Russian "serfs" to her sons, and if they do not accept their doom, to "apply correctives." Unqualified as is Mr. Howe's admiration for the despotisms of France and Russia, he will search in vain in those countries for that loyal devotion to the Throne which throughout the British Empire gives a security for the continuance of power which neither of them possesses.

Mr. Howe's scheme would be as useless as it would be unjust and oppressive. Impoverish the treasuries of the Colonies, and subject their inhabitants to a conscription to-morrow, and the Empire would be weakened instead of strengthened. Who would be mad enough to withdraw a pound from the treasury of British America, or a man from its population, to fight beyond the seas, with the probability that the first attempt of any power to humiliate England would be to wrest those splendid possessions from her

grasp, and that all the resources of these Colonies would be required to maintain the dignity of the Empire by protecting their own soil from being desecrated by the enemies of England? British Colonists recognize the same obligations to contribute both men and money to the defence of that portion of the Empire in which they live, as the inhabitants of these islands, and in all the Colonies enjoying representative institutions they are loyally discharging that duty. Nor is this all. Should the Imperial Government at any time declare war upon the United States, upon grounds of purely Imperial policy, British America must not only lavish her blood and treasure in defence of the Empire, but also furnish the battle-field, and see her country devastated in the struggle to maintain the honor and the glory of Great Britain. All this she cheerfully accepts as not too high a price to pay for the inestimable blessings of British Institutions and the protection of Great Britain; but surely this is enough without reducing her loyal population to a condition of Russian serfdom. The taxation and conscription which Mr. Howe proposes for the Colonies would necessarily be in addition to the expenditure now required to keep the militia in a due state of preparation to meet any emergency required for the defence of the country, as otherwise the whole system would be fraught with the most obvious weakness, which would at all times invite aggression. It is not the standing army of England, but the military prowess of the volunteer force and militia which she has developed that ensures her against any attempt at invasion. Mr. Howe says, he "would proceed to treat the whole Empire as the British "Islands are now treated, holding every man liable to serve the Queen in "war, and making every pound's worth of property responsible for the "national defence." Yet his scheme leaves the British Islands in the same position which they and the Colonies alike now occupy, and proposes a system of serfdom for the Colonies alone, which not only does not exist, but would never be tolerated in Great Britain. Surely a gentleman who proposes to teach the Statesmen and Parliament of England how to organize and protect the Empire, ought to know that not a free man in the British Islands is liable to conscription, nor a pound's worth of property exposed to be levied upon for any purpose save as specially provided for by an enactment made by the Parliament of their country. Mr. Howe thus estimates the value of the boon he asks in return for these sacrifices. He says (page 20):—"It is not probable that all these Colonies would send these members "to waste their time in the House of Commons when they had no special "grievance to discuss or policy to represent, because their leading men in "the absence of these would be better employed at home."

Thus, then, according to his own showing, the consideration for this contribution of men and money is not to be worth enjoying after it is obtained. Again, as if to place beyond doubt the possibility of the Colonial representatives having any influence in the Imperial Parliament, Mr. Howe says, (page 21):—

"There is no danger of this. These men would represent communities wide as the poles asunder, with climates, soils, production, interests as varied as the skies under which they were bred. They would know less of each other and each other's interests than the body of Englishmen among whom they were thrown would know of them all."

If any thing more were required to show conclusively the futility of this proposal, Mr. Howe has furnished it in his description of the incidental benefits which would be attained by the adoption of his proposal. He says, (p. 29):

"We would have in all the Provinces Responsible Government, independent Courts and Legislatures, a free press, municipal institutions, the entire controul of our own revenues, (the defence contribution being deducted,) and the regulation of our trade, foreign and domestic, and we should have the right of free discussion of International and Intercolonial questions in the House of Commons."

Well aware as you are that all the Colonies to which Mr. Howe proposes to apply his scheme now enjoy all these privileges to the fullest extent, save and except the privilege of making a speech on a "Colonial grievance" once in ten years, and "wasting their time in the House of Commons" "when they would be better employed at home," it cannot but be apparent how much he was embarrassed by the effort to show some commensurate advantages which would accrue to the Colonies in return for the taxation proposed, and the serfdom to which he wished to reduce them. Mr. Howe must have forgotten, when venturing this statement, that he had already de-(clared page 7), that "the powers conferred upon the English speaking Co-"lonies leave them nothing, as respects domestic administration, to be desir-"ed." The following enumeration of perspective benefits is still more unintelligible. He says—"Now I have touched upon a number of subsidiary "measures, such as a national currency, weights and measures, uniformity "of police, systematic plantation, and the relief of the poor rates, postal, sav-"ings' banks, public improvements, and decennial exhibitions." If this means anything, it must be that Mr. Howe proposes to take the legislation upon all these matters out of the hands of the "serfs" who now enjoy free institutions, and place it in the hands of a Parliament where they would have one member in a house of six hundred and fifty-eight.

I frankly confess that I am equally unable to understand the following assertion made by Mr. Howe (page 31):—

"If a Zolverin, such as the Germans have, or free trade between states such as the Great Republic enjoys, be advantageous, we have them on the widest scale and with a far larger population."

Not only is there no proposition for free trade either between England and her Colonies, or between the Colonies themselves, contained in Mr. Howe's scheme, but the very reverse is inevitably involved. He declares that direct taxation will cost so much to enforce it, that all this contribution which is to relieve the people of Great Britain in so marked a degree, is to be raised by an additional duty levied upon imports. In other words, the Colonies are to raise this tax by levying it upon the goods imported from Great Britain, from each other, and necessarily increasing their existing tariffs by the amount required for that purpose. This appears to be Mr. Howe's notion of free trade.

I must admit that Mr. Howe has, in one part of his last pamphlet, done greater justice to the character of Colonial Institutions than I had expected at his hands. In advocating the selection of the Colonial representatives in the Imperial Parliament by the Local Governments of the day, he frankly says,—"We are secure of men truly representing the majority in each "Colony, because they would speak in the name, and bring with them the "authority of the Cabinets and Constituencies they represented." And again —"We are secure by this mode of obtaining the best men, because only the "best can win their way into these Colonial Cabinets, of whom the flower "would be selected by their colleagues to represent the intellect and the "character of each Province, on the floor of Parliament." When it is recollected that Mr. Howe's mission to this country was to prove that the Representatives of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, selected by the Governments of these Provinces, were endeavouring to sacrifice the best interests of the country, and that Mr. Howe, without even a seat in the Legislature, ought to be accepted as the real representative of the majority of the people of Nova Scotia, you will not fail to perceive at how great a sacrifice this candid admission of the respect due to Colonial Cabinets has been made. But this is not the only evidence of his present estimate of Colonial Statesmen. In his first pamphlet, he deplored as a grievous misfortune the

probability of having Colonists, commissioned by Her Majesty's Representative, to discharge the duties of Lieutenant Governors. But already *tout cela est changé*. He now says (page 15):—

"These men would bring with them stores of accurate information, often invaluable in parliamentary enquiries, and they might sometimes throw into the debates the fruits of long experience, and the subtle vivacity of very accomplished minds."

In conclusion Mr. Howe's says (page 27):—

"There is enough of doubt to perplex and almost to deter them from trying this experiment, yet it is so hopeful, there is so little to be lost by failure and so much to be gained by success that with all respect I would urge Her Majesty's Government to give the question their grave consideration. That it is the duty and would be for the interest of all Her Majesty's subjects in the outlying provinces, fairly admitted to the enjoyment of the privileges indicated, to make this contribution, I have not the shadow of doubt."

It is not easy to see how Mr. Howe can have any doubt as to the fate such a proposition would meet with at the hands of any body of intelligent representatives in any British Colony. He knows that twelve years ago he advocated Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament, with all the ability he possessed, and that down to the present hour no man has been found to second his proposition. He knows that several years ago he laid the same scheme before the British public, with the same result, and that after years of deliberation, when in 1861 he held the post of Premier of Nova Scotia, he did not venture to submit such a project, but obtained the sanction of the Legislature to the policy of uniting the British North American Provinces under one Government, as the best means of organizing that portion of the Empire. Yet now, when the Government and Legislature of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, have agreed to that policy, and it has every prospect of an early and successful consummation, Mr. Howe unites with all the enemies of England in an endeavour to obstruct it, and proposes to Her Majesty's Government to try an "experiment" of which Mr. Howe is himself the sole advocate.

It is not necessary that I should draw your attention to the impracticability of a scheme so essentially at variance with the system of Government now in operation, both in this country and in the Colonies, but I may be permitted to suggest the not unlikely spectacle of having in the same Parliament a Minister of the Crown from a Colony opposing a Colonial Minister on a question of Colonial administration,—or a Minister from one Colony opposing that of another. Mr. Howe says that his scheme could do no harm if rejected by the Colonies to whom it was offered. On this important point I entertain a very different opinion. In no period in the history of the Colonies has a better feeling existed between them and the Parent State, than at the present moment. The Colonies have not only evinced the most devoted attachment to the Crown and to the Mother Country, but have shewn a readiness worthy of all praise to contribute to the defence of the Empire, both in men and money, to the utmost extent of their resources, while on the other hand the Imperial Government have given the most satisfactory assurances of their determination to preserve intact the integrity of the Colonial Empire and to resent any invasion of Colonial territory as promptly as if the British Islands were assailed. To insinuate under these circumstances that Colonies, making the heaviest sacrifices, are doing nothing for the defence of the Empire, is unjust in the last degree, and for the Imperial Government to propose to reduce British Colonists to a condition of Russian serfdom, only to meet with inevitable refusal, would be to engender bad blood and useless recrimination, which could only be desired by those who openly or covertly wish to accomplish the dismemberment of the Empire.

The perusal of the two pamphlets written by Mr. Howe within a few weeks of each other, affords the best evidence of the utter want of principle of the writer, and the impossibility of opposing Confederation without resorting to the most disingenuous and contradictory statements. Contrast the statements in these two *brochures*, and you will find—

Mr. Howe opposed Union on the ground that no change was required in our existing institutions. He now declares that "we have no security for peace," and that a radical change in the Colonial system is imperatively demanded, and especially in order to preserve British America.

Mr. Howe objected to Confederation because it would interfere with self-government and swamp the influence of the Maritime Provinces, as 47 members would not have sufficient weight in a Parliament of 194 to protect their interests. He now declares that five members from Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, will be quite sufficient to obtain justice in a Parliament of 658.

Mr. Howe objected to Confederation on the ground that it would increase the existing tariffs in British America. He now advocates a scheme of taxation for Imperial purposes which must inevitably involve a very great increase in the tariffs of all the Provinces.

Mr. Howe objected to Union because it would entail additional expenditure to protect the frontier of Canada. He now asks to have the Colonies taxed to support the army and navy of Great Britain, and declares our readiness to pay pound for pound with the Canadians.

Mr. Howe opposed Confederation on the ground that some of our young men might be called upon to aid in the defence of other portions of British America. He now proposes to subject every man in the Colony to conscription, to fight the battles of England in every part of the world!

Mr. Howe undertook to prove that the members of the Government of Nova Scotia misrepresented the public sentiment of the country, and were not worthy of consideration. He now assures the British Ministry, that the best mode of obtaining a representative for a Colony would be to take a member of the Cabinet, as they would thus "secure men truly representing the majority in each Colony," and declares that "only the best men can win their way into these Colonial Cabinets."

The loyal and patriotic men who have so nobly sustained the cause of British American Union cannot but be justly proud of the triumphant position that policy occupies after emerging from the ordeal of the strictest scrutiny, while the misguided but loyal men who have been deluded into opposition to the great work of consolidating British power and perpetuating British Institutions in the Colonies, by Mr. Howe's aspersion that it would involve some expense, cannot but feel justly indignant when they find their representative declaring that it is necessary that the Colonies should be compelled to submit to the most oppressive taxation for Imperial purposes, and that Colonists should be reduced to the same condition of serfdom which exists in Russia, and subjected to conscription to recruit the army and man the navy of England for every war in which she may engage.

In the confident belief that the enlightened Statesmen who control the destinies of the Empire, will treat with the contempt which it deserves this audacious proposal to substitute the despotism of France and Russia for the free constitutional system which has made British Institutions the envy of the world,

I remain, Your most obedient, Humble servant,

CHARLES TUPPER.

London, November 23rd, 1866.